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**Haik Nazaryan**



First of all, I would like to apologize for making this long. I just thought it would be nice to put all my thoughts and emotions I have been keeping inside for the past 40 days on paper. I am writing this in English so that everyone can understand including Armenians around the world who can't read Armenian and my European comrades. I think it is important to tell everyone my experience being in the fatherland for the first time in my life. Forty days have passed and today is my last day in the fatherland. It breaks my heart to have to go back because I am leaving a place which is very dear to my heart. All my life I have felt a sort of emptiness and alienation which vanished the second I stepped foot on the land of my forefathers. I am angry about all the negative things I have been told about Armenia from my fellow Armenians, nearly all of it turned out to be a complete lie. I have never felt more of a complete person, mentally, physically and spiritually as I do in my own country. Being around your own kind and living on the land which your forefathers have fought, suffered and died gives you a sort of strength which words cannot describe. I did not just visit my country as a tourist going to only the tourist attraction sites and staying in a fancy room in the center of town. I rented a simple and convenient place in the south part of town where no tourist will even set foot on and spent my 40 days with people from all walks of life. I have met and spent time with professors, freedom fighters, generals, politicians, soldiers, labor men, doctors, police officers, programmers, villagers, taxi drivers and many others to really understand and feel how life is over here. I have hiked mountains, swam in rivers next to a waterfall, ate lunch with labor men in their work field, spent days at villages, danced "kochari" with freedom fighters at weddings and did so much more. The time I have spent here will never be forgotten and will be ingrained in my memories forever. I always knew and felt that Armenia is where I belong and this trip really showed me that not only is Armenia made for me but that I am made for Armenia. Everything about Armenia really speaks to my soul. There is definitely something very spiritual about this place and while living here I really felt my body unite with my spirit.

All my life I knew without a doubt that I have a special destiny here and this trip was a total confirmation. Do not believe anything people say until you experience something for yourself, that is another very important lesson I learned while being here. I have met with many people here and I can honestly say that almost all was nothing but positive experiences. I have met more dear friends here in 40 days than I have living in California my whole life. The love for my people, the loyalty to my people and country is something that no amount of money in the world can take away from me. It is absolutely crucial for us to understand that we must accept personal responsibility for whatever situation our country is in, good or bad. We must accept personal responsibility and do whatever we can do to make sure that our future descendants have a better country to live in instead of throwing blame on others and expecting them to make it better while we sit on our hands. Everyone can participate no matter what with NO excuses whatsoever. We are lying to ourselves by saying that we can still stay Armenian by living outside the fatherland, something which is impossible and foolish to believe. Armenians can only remain Armenian in Armenia and that is the plain and simple truth. I have come to the conclusion that the only place for a true nationalist and patriot is his or her own fatherland. The adventure I had was not only a journey to discover Armenia, but more of a journey to discover myself. The experiences I had here was nothing short of magical and I would like to thank everyone who made this trip so wonderful for me. I feel like I am reborn and this was definitely my 40 days “in the desert” or more like 40 days in the mountains. I end my trip with a joyful heart in the knowledge of what my real calling has always been and what it will always be, to serve Armenia by any means necessary without any ifs, buts, where’s, how’s or whys and to one day very soon return to her and never look back.

**Much love to my one and only Armenia, may you prosper and live forever.**

**Haik Nazaryan**

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